

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A steering column apparatus comprising:

~~a steering column provided with a vehicle body-side bracket mounted to a vehicle body strength member to have a pair of side plate portions opposed each other to be extended in a vertical direction; and a generally cylindrical distance unit for supporting a steering shaft to be rotatable therein and having a pair of pressed and expanding portions formed to be expanded by plastic working to be pressed and supported by said side plate portions of said body side bracket~~

a steering column for supporting a steering shaft to be rotatable therein, the steering column being formed with a distance unit expanded by hydroforming plastic working and having a pair of side portions disposed to be clamped between said side plate portions of said body-side bracket to fix a position of said steering column;  
and

an adjusting mechanism operable to clamp and release  
said side portions of said distance unit~~capable of~~  
~~adjusting a position of said steering column~~ with respect  
to said side plate portions of said body-side bracket  
~~within a predetermined range~~ to permit adjustment of the  
steering column position,

wherein said steering column is formed with a  
reinforcement portion for enhancing the clamping rigidity  
of said distance unit with respect to said side plate  
portions.

2. (Currently Amended) A steering column apparatus  
according to claim 1, wherein said reinforcement portion  
is formed ~~by couplings~~ so as to couple said ~~pressed and~~  
~~expanding~~ side portions of said distance unit together in  
at least one of an upper part and a lower part of said  
~~pressed and expanding~~ side portions.

3. (Currently Amended) A steering column apparatus  
according to claim 1, wherein said reinforcement portion  
~~is comprised of a plurality of~~ includes at least one  
convex streaks or a ~~plurality of~~ concave streaks.

4. (Previously Presented) A steering column  
apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said steering

column is adjustable at least in one of a tilting direction or a telescopic direction with respect to said body-side bracket.

5. (Cancelled)

6. (Currently Amended) A steering column apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said reinforcement portion ~~is comprised of a plurality of~~ includes at least one convex streaks or ~~a plurality of~~ concave streaks.

7. (Previously Presented) A steering column apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said steering column is adjustable at least in one of a tilting direction or a telescopic direction with respect to said body-side bracket.

8. (Cancelled)

9. (New) A steering column apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said steering column is adjustable at least in one of a tilting direction or a telescopic direction with respect to said body-side bracket.

10. (New) A steering column apparatus comprising:

a vehicle body-side bracket mounted to a vehicle body member and having a pair of side plate portions opposed each other;

a steering column having an expanded portion with a pair of side portions disposed to be clamped between said side plate portions of the body-side bracket to fix a position of said steering column; and

an adjusting mechanism operable to clamp and release said side portions of said expanded portion with respect to said side plate portions of the body-side bracket to permit adjustment of the steering column position,

wherein an upper wall portion of the steering column between said side portions of said expanded portion is formed with a reinforcement portion which enhances a clamping rigidity of said expanded portion with respect to said side plate portions of the body side bracket.

11. (New) A steering column apparatus according to claim 10, wherein said reinforcement portion includes a convex or concave formation on said upper wall portion.

12. (New) A steering column apparatus according to claim 10, wherein said reinforcement portion extends along a plane transverse to an axis of said steering column.

13. (New) A steering column apparatus according to claim 12, wherein said reinforcement portion includes a convex or concave band.

14. (New) A steering column apparatus according to claim 13, wherein said band couples said side portions of said expanded portion.

15. (New) A steering column apparatus according to claim 14, wherein said reinforcement portion includes a plurality of said bands.

16. (New) A steering column apparatus according to claim 13, wherein said reinforcement portion includes a plurality of said bands.

17. (New) A steering column apparatus according to claim 10, wherein a further said reinforcement portion is formed on a bottom wall of said expanded portion.

18. (New) A steering column apparatus according to claim 10, wherein said steering column is adjustable at least in one of a tilting direction or a telescopic direction with respect to said body-side bracket.

19. (New) A steering column apparatus according to claim 10, wherein said upper wall portion of said steering column has an arch-shaped cross-section.

20. (New) A steering column apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said reinforcement portion includes a convex or concave formation on said upper wall portion.

21. (New) A steering column apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said reinforcement portion extends circumferentially of said upper wall portion.

22. (New) A steering column apparatus according to claim 21, wherein said reinforcement portion includes a convex or concave band.

23. (New) A steering column apparatus according to claim 22, wherein said band couples said side portions of said expanded portion.

24. (New) A steering column apparatus according to claim 23, wherein said reinforcement portion includes a plurality of said bands.

25. (New) A steering column apparatus according to claim 22, wherein said reinforcement portion includes a plurality of said bands.

26. (New) A steering column apparatus according to claim 19, wherein a further said reinforcement portion is formed on a bottom wall of said expanded portion.

27. (New) A steering column apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said steering column is adjustable at least in one of a tilting direction or a telescopic direction with respect to said body-side bracket.

28. (New) A steering column apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said cross-section of said upper wall is arcuate.

29. (New) A steering column apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said expanded portion is formed by hydroforming.

30. (New) A steering column apparatus according to claim 10, wherein said expanded portion is formed by hydroforming.